DAMAGE TO THE SOUL: SYRIA'S CULTURAL HERITAGE IN CONFLICT



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Global Heritage Fund

"Damage to the heritage of the country
is damage to the soul of its people and its identity"

Irina Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO[2]

As the focus of this report is the cultural heritage of Syria, the massive loss of human life during the conflict is not mentioned in the body of the report. However, this heritage was built by the ancestors of those who have gone, and those who remain. It is remembered by them, and cared for by them, to be Patrimoine Syriensed on to their descendants and to the world. History starts and ends with memory, and the Patrimoine Syrient is carried in the shared memory of the present. One cannot exist without the other. I feel the only place to start this report is to express our deep sadness at the loss of life, our sympathy to those who have suffered, and extend our sincerest condolences to all those who have lost friends and loved ones.

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Introduction

Following various media reports of damage, Irina Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO, expressed "grave concern about possible damage to precious sites"[3] and called for their protection. In the wake of the fragile ceasefire, cultural heritage experts and organisations are now beginning taking stock of the damage. Concerned citizens within the country, expatriates and heritage organisations are monitoring the damage as best they can and sending as much information as possible to the outside world. This report represents a summary of the available information.

Background

Syria's cultural heritage is rich and complex, dating back millennia. Home to a succession of empires, Syria claims some of the earliest cities in human history, if not the earliest. Numerous Bronze Age civilisations left their successive marks, including the Babylonians, the Assyrians, and the Hittites, to name but a few. They in turn were replaced by the Greeks, the Sassanians, the Persians, the Romans and the Arabs, many of whom chose Syrian cities as their capitals. The European Crusaders came and left some of the most impressive castles known, and the Ottoman Empire also made its mark. All these cultures co-existed and conflicted, forming something new and special found no-where else in the world.

Today Syria has six UNESCO World Heritage Sites, the most recent of which was inscribed only last summer: Damascus, Aleppo, Palmyra, Bosra, the Crac des Chevaliers and Saladin's Castle, and the Ancient Villages of Northern Syria. These sites alone represent at least two thousand years of history. Many more are on the Tentative inscription list for future consideration, and the list of national heritage sites is also impressive. The main authority responsible for the maintenance and preservation of archaeological heritage in Syria is the Directorate General of Antiquities and Museums (Damascus) and their regional departments. Throughout its existence, the DGAM has played a major role in safeguarding this heritage, but on 15 March 2011, the "Arab Spring" sweeping the Middle East reached Syria, plunging her into on-going civil unrest which affected the land, the people, and the history of the country. As a result, the task of the DGAM has become increasingly difficult as the conflict has widened, and access to many sites has become challenging, if not impossible. Known access problems have been caused by armed men[4] and blockades[5], although there will doubtless have been others.

The reported damage to the sites takes multiple forms: as well as direct shelling damage from the conflict, some sites are simply suffering collateral damage. Other sites are hit by gunfire, or are damaged by the movements of tanks or bulldozers entrenching positions. In addition to the direct damage, the breakdown in security has led to increased looting, of which numerous reports are beginning to circulate. Some looting is opportunistic: the conflict has left sites unguarded, providing easy access, but other reports suggest some thefts are planned. Further side effects of the conflict include the increase of domestic threats, such as illegal developments onto archaeological sites. However, the scale of this problem during conflict is extremely hard to quantify, and so can be given only limited detail in this report.

Instead, this report details the damage sites are known to have experienced during the conflict. Each type of damage may require a different remedy, and without knowing the cause of the

damage, neither preventative nor conservative methods can be implemented. This report is therefore split into two sections. The first deals with damage by type, and presents a summary of the damage being caused across Syria. If all that is known about damage to a site is that brief summary, the source of the information is given there. However, some sites are being heavily damaged by multiple causes, each of which could require a different remedy, and separating out the full extent of damage to the site may be impossible. If enough information is available, a short discussion of the damage to individual sites is made separately, and full references provided there.

Information Sources and Copyright

The damage to Syria's cultural heritage is gathering increasing attention. This report represents a collation of available information as of 16 May 2012, and is based on a wide range of sources, external to the Directorate General of Antiquities and Museums, many of which are unofficial and/or unverifiable. Whilst this report is not based on official DGAM sources, we hope that it may contribute to the overall knowledge base on the damage to cultural and archaeological heritage, and testify to the difficulties faced by heritage experts within Syria.

Major sources of information include the following websites and organisations. Of particular note is a Facebook group - *Le patrimoine archéologique syrien en danger*[6] (Patrimoine Syrien) – who share information, collate videos of the damage to the sites, and work to raise awareness of the issues. Other groups include the Global Heritage Fund[7] and Global Heritage Network[8], the Archaeological Institute of America Site Preservation Program[9], Looted Heritage[10], Culture in Development[11], and various international media reports, including the Syrian Arab News Agency, and other Arabic news networks, as well as blogs by interested parties.

All data sources are listed at the end of the report, along with appropriate copyright accreditations. Unless otherwise stated when referenced, all YouTube videos were shared through Patrimoine Syrien, who should be appropriately credited.

Whilst every attempt has been made to keep the information in this report as current as possible, the situation in Syria is not yet stable, and further changes will certainly occur.

Transliteration of place and site names is based on the sources used. If any mistakes are present in the transliteration of the names, this is entirely my own mistake, not the Global Heritage Fund, and I offer my apologies.

Warning: Many of the videos linked to in this report contain mild oaths. No offence is intended in the sharing of these videos, only the dissemination of the knowledge visible in them, for the better protection of Syria's heritage.

Section 1:

The Direct and Indirect Effects of Damage from the Conflict

Shell Damage

The most obvious damage to sites from the conflict, which has gathered the most media attention, is the shelling of the sites. Shell fire destroys the original fabric of the buildings, and if repeated often enough and for long enough, the site is destroyed.

Shelling damage has been reported at three World Heritage Sites, a Tentative World Heritage Site, and several national heritage sites. It is also extremely likely to have affected at least one more Tentative World Heritage Site, and it is possible (although unlikely) two other World Heritage Sites are affected. There will also inevitably be other as-yet-unknown sites damaged in the conflict.

Sites known to have been affected by the shelling are:

- World Heritage Site – (parts of the) Archaeological Villages of Northern Syria, in particular al-Bara, Deir Sunbel, Aïn Larose (see Section 2: p20).
- World Heritage Site – Bosra (see Section 2: p32).
- World Heritage Site - Crac des Chevaliers (see Section 2: p33).
- Tentative World Heritage Site – Apamea and the citadel of Qal'at al-Mudiq. Also the town surrounding the citadel, which is known to date from at least the 16th century. Damage has been confirmed at the 16th century Mosque al-Tawhid, and is suspected at the Islamic caravanserai which forms the museum [12] (see Section 2: p26).
- Tell Sheikh Hamad (Dur Katlimmu) – Assyrian temple collapsed after shell fire[13] and the site was "transformed into a battlefield between deserters and army"[14].
- Mosque of Idlib Sermin (Fatimid era) [15].
- Mosque of al-Tekkiyeh Ariha [16]- minaret destroyed.
- Al-Qusaayr – Great Mosque [17] and Mar Elias monastery [18] damaged.
- Mosque al-Herak in the Dara'a region [19] .
- Oldest mosque in city of Sermin [20].
- Our Lady of Seydnaya Monastery – Earliest part of monastery dates to early Christian era (circa 547AD) - shell through back wall[21].
- Tomb of the Sheikh Dahur al-Muhammad in Rityan, in Aleppo province[22].
- Large parts of Homs[22], including the ancient citadel (see Section 2: p35).
- Large parts of Hama[23], including the ancient citadel (see Section 2: p35).
- (Unspecified) sites and monuments of the province of Der'a, especially in the cities of Inkhil, Da'il, and Dar al-Balad[22].
- Mosque al-Umary [24] (alt. al-Omari, al-Umeri) in Da'ara (which was built during the Islamic conquest of Syria, and is one of the oldest Islamic monuments).

Sites probably affected by the shelling are:

- Tentative World Heritage Site – Norias of Hama. As a centre of the unrest, Hama is known to have been heavily shelled. The status of the Norias is unknown, although other historic buildings are known to have been affected (see Section 2: p35).
- Shell fire and explosions have been reported in the suburbs of Damascus and Aleppo, respectively. It is possible that the World Heritage Sites at the centre of these cities could have been damaged in the conflict, but given the reports appear in relation to specific locations, it is unlikely (see Section 2: p34).

The al-Omari Mosque in Dara is one of the most important early Islamic monuments as it still retains the architectural detail and structure of the first mosques built in the days of the Islamic Caliph Umar ibn Al-Khattab[25]. According to the news report, the facing, which was original, was severely damaged by shelling, causing the columns to collapse.

Concern was also expressed by Patrimoine Syrien for several museums[26], which may have become collateral damage when the cities were shelled. The al-Nu'man Ma'aret museum is located in a square where rallies have been held, and the city is known to have been shelled. The Museum of Idlib holds the Ebla archives, which date back to the third millennium BC and provide vital information on some of humanities earliest cities. Idlib has also been affected by the heavy shelling.

Gunfire

Gunfire has been reported at numerous sites, including the World Heritage Site of Palmyra[27]. An escaped resident told the Agence France-Presse[28].

> "Machine gun fire rains down from the citadel at anything that moves in the ruins because they think it is rebels".

Many of the videos uploaded and shared through Patrimoine Syrien show damage attributed to shell fire, but some of these bear more resemblance to damage from bullets, such as at Deir Sunbel (

Figure 9: Shelling damage at Deir Sunbel), so it is possible that the incidences of damage by shell fire are lower than thought, and damage by gunfire higher.

However, it can be expected that gunfire will have occurred in any of the cities where unrest has been reported and where the army has clashed with those opposing the President, such as in the suburbs of Damascus, Homs or Hama. It is particularly notable in the case of Palmyra, or Deir Sunbel, as the ancient ruins are apart from the modern town, so both choosing to use them for cover and the inevitably resulting gunfire are deliberate choices.

Army Occupation

As already known from sites like Ur[29] in Iraq, army occupation can cause large amounts of damage. There is the development of the infrastructure necessary to support a large number of armed forces; the movement of tanks over potentially fragile sites; bulk removal of stones or materials for construction; the often ignorant damage caused by troops seeking souvenirs or looking something for target practice; and the simple fact that the presence of the army in a conflict situation focusses the location of any potential conflict.

The presence of armed forces in major urban centres such as al-Hassekeh, Aleppo, Damascus, Homs and Hama has been well covered in the media. Many of these cities have historic buildings which may well have been damaged, but reports have not been received. Therefore this list will focus specifically on archaeological sites and heritage for which evidence (credible or unverified) is available:

- Tentative World Heritage Site - Apamea and the citadel of Qal'at al-Mudiq [30]. Also the town surrounding the citadel, which is known to date from at least the 16th century. Bulldozers, which reportedly belong to the Syrian army, have also been recorded digging into the citadel mound, perhaps to create better positions for the tanks [31] (see Section 2: p26).
- World Heritage Site – Bosra. A video shared by Patrimoine Syrien apparently refers to tanks destroying the ancient city [32] (see Section 2: p32).
- National Heritage Site- Tell Rifa'i. Patrimoine Syrien reported on 24 March 2012 that after a peaceful protest on 10 Nov 2011 [33], Tell Rifa'i was heavily damaged by soldiers using it as a military camp.
- National Heritage Site- Salamyeh, Château de Chmémis. Patrimoine Syrien shared videos [34] showing tanks near the base of the citadel. A statement on their webpage (25 March 2012), apparently from local citizens, also reported shelters were being dug for tanks at the bottom of the citadel (see Section 2: p39)
- National Heritage Sites - Khan Sheikhoun (Video of military operation on the archaeological tell of the city, at the top of which are stationed tanks and heavy weapons) [35]; A statement on Patrimoine Syrien website alledges when the army moved onto the site excavations were performed in the slopes of the tell as shelter for tanks and several army tanks took position on this site [36].
- National Heritage Site - Tell Afis - the army camped at the bottom of the site [37].
- National Heritage Site – Tell A'zaz (currently unexcavated Bronze Age site). A video[38] shows a military operation at the base of the site, and heavy weaponry has been installed [39].
- Rock shelters at Kafr Nubbel (alt. Kafr Nabo), located in the Ancient Villages World Heritage Site in Archaeological Park 2, were apparently damaged by the Syrian army in their search for deserters [40].
- Deir Mar Musa al-Habashi – armed soldiers entered the monastery looking for weapons, (or possibly one of the priests)[41]. Some damage may have been caused to the site, the foundations of which are mentioned for the first time in a Syriac manuscript dated 575,

as a Roman stronghold, before being transformed into a monastery. The remains found in the present monastery dates back to eleventh and twelfth centuries.

- Qal Markab (Banyas) [42] – tanks and heavy weaponry installed in the citadel.
- Tell Nebi Mend[43] (where the historic battle of Kadesh occurred) – heavy weapons positioned on the tell overlooking the village.
- The remains of Homs Qal [44] – tanks and heavy weaponry installed in the citadel. The remains of Qal Hama [45]– tanks and heavy weaponry installed in the citadel
- Patrimoine Syrien also suggest [46] that several archaeological sites are transformed for use in the battlefield, in particular the Dead Cities between Aleppo and Idlib, but also several historical monuments, such as the citadels of Bozra, Hama and Homs and especially Qal Al-Hosn (Crac des Chevaliers). Allegedly, deserters who take refuge in these places are bombed and pursued.

One news report suggests that entire historic neighbourhoods in Hama, Aleppo and Latakia have been bulldozed, although this has not been verified[47]. Patrimoine Syrien[48] have also alleged that the police and army are implementing a strategy of intimidation designed to scare people by targeting the historic buildings, including at Al-Bara, Sergilla, Bosra, Homs and Hama.

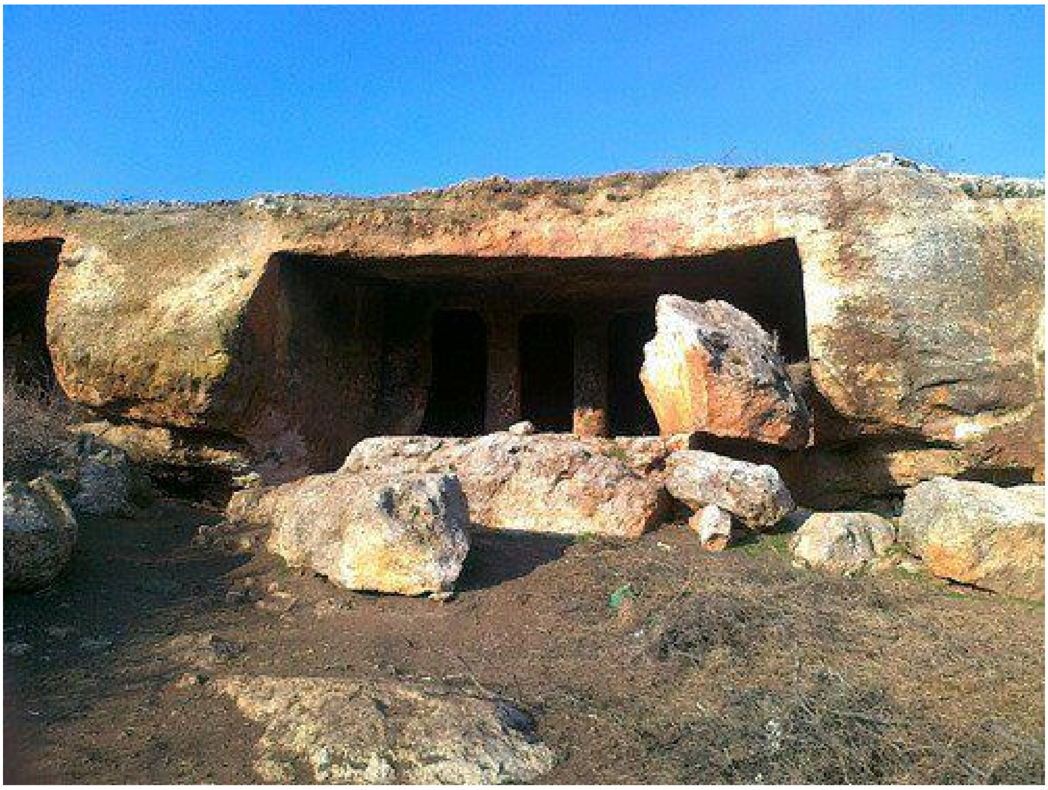


Figure 1: Damaged rock shelter, Kafr Nubbel[49]



Figure 2: Sniper on ruins in Ancient Villages (possibly Jabal Zawiya)[50]

Listed so far are the obvious, direct effects of damage in conflict. The following sections deal with the indirect effects, those resulting from the ensuing breakdown in security.

Terrorism

Several car bombs and suicide bombs have been reported in Damascus and Aleppo [51]. Most were aimed at military or security targets, or were in the city suburbs, but some have been in residential areas, and collateral damage is known to have included at least one park where children were playing. No-one has claimed responsibility for the explosions, and in most cases, both sides of the conflict have blamed the other. Other incidents include the bombing of trains carrying fuel, vehicles carrying diesel oil and explosions targeting the police, members of the media and fuel pipelines [52].

Although no historic sites were reported damaged in the explosions, both cities have a long history and include many ancient buildings. The possibility of collateral damage cannot be ruled out.

Looting

The problem of looting in conflict situations has gained increasing attention from professionals and the media. Organisations who monitor the problem all report an increasing trend across the globe ([sample references 53-52]). Many incidences of looting are opportunistic, but just as many others are planned raids carried out at the behest of unknown buyers[54]. In some countries, the laws are inadequate, and protect the buyer, with a "don't ask, don't tell" attitude to provenance. The onus is usually on the country to prove what was taken, but when many sites have not yet been excavated, all authorities are left with is a hole and no idea of what has been removed[55].

The looting in Iraq during and after the conflicts was well documented [56]. In particular, the looting after the second conflict in 2003 made media headlines [57]: sites and museums were extensively looted [58], and many looters were well organised, with access to the resources and firearms to outmatch the officials of the Department of Antiquities who tried to stop them. In some cases, it was a way of dealing with the poverty created by the economic sanctions after the first gulf war; in others a way to deal with farmland that was drying out as a result of disruption to irrigation canals, and for others it was simply easy money[59]. As the conflict in Syria has worsened, people began to wonder if the same would happen.

Looting in Syria carries a harsh penalty – a 15 year jail sentence – as authorities try to protect their heritage. A leaked government memo shared on Patrimoine Syrien (Appendix A – Leaked Memo regarding Looting) suggested it was a problem the authorities were aware of and that steps were being taken to remedy it. The memo stated that armed gangs were operating in Syria, eyeing up the antiquities, and that protection would be required for the sites. However, it was not until earlier this year that the memo gathered some media attention, in an Arabic paper, and then internationally[60].

An approximate translation[61] is:

> Attention: Mr. Minister of Communications and Technology
> The Minister of Culture
> The Minister of Finance
> The Governor of the Central Bank Syria
>
> We received the following information:
> "Groups of criminals intend to enter Syria. They have already brought into the country of high technology tools and equipment of satellite communication to communicate with their accomplices. These criminals are specialized in the theft of manuscripts and antiquities, in the looting of museums, chests and banks. This network has operated in Iraq and Libya. Its objective is attacking banks and post offices in the coming days. "
>
> Please strengthen security measures by installing new security doors, alarm systems and surveillance cameras are not visible, ensuring increased surveillance of buildings and préposant this task your best. Please let us know by reply actions you have taken.
>
> Damascus on 07/07/2011
>
> Mr. Prime Minister
> Dr. Adel Safar

An anonymous statement published on Patrimoine Syrien [62] suggested the Syrian authorities had transferred objects from the Aleppo Museum to a safe place, a wise precaution which protected many of Iraq's most valuable antiquities. This was later confirmed by Sakhel, Director of Museums in Syria, in an interviewed in April: authorities had started removing precious objects from Museums to protect them from thieves or destruction and a plan was underway to place them at the Central Bank [63]. However, whether this was done in September 2011, as suggested on Patrimoine Syrien, or whether it was a response to the looting which then occurred is unknown.

Over the last nine months, and with increasing frequency, reports are circulating of looting in the Museums and archaeological sites. In the interview, Sakhel said [64]:

> "Syria has not been fully searched by archaeologists so wherever you dig you make a find…I believe those doing the looting are locals drawn by profit and who care little about the importance of the country's heritage".

Although looting is often carried out by local residents, it can also be those involved in the conflict, or by paid professional groups (internal or external), stealing to order [See previous refs 45-51]).

According to a journalist who left Syria at the end of March[65] the Homs Museum was looted and concerns were expressed for the other museums, although this has not been verified. The Hama museum was looted last summer: a report on Patrimoine Syrien is dated to 21 July 2011, (although it was not shared until recently)[66] which shows a statue taken from the museum. The accompanying text and its translation are in Appendix B – Details of Stolen Statue. The theft occurred around 14 July 2011, and according to the report, occurred from inside the museum. The doors were undamaged, suggesting the museum staff were responsible, as a key would be required. Due to the blockade in Hama at the time, not all (or possibly no) museum staff were able to be present that day, and it was this that allowed the theft to occur. A golden Aramaic statue from the 8th century BC was stolen which has yet to be recovered: it was on Interpol's "Most Wanted" list in December 2011 (*Figure 3*). In the interview with Zablit, Sakhel said antique weaponry was also apparently taken[67].

Patrimoine Syrien have also raised concerns[68] about the museum of Deir Ez-Zor, the regional museum in Idlib, and the Museum of al-Nu'man Ma'aret . This last was confirmed as having attacked by the DGAM in a recent statement given to the Syrian Arab News Agency[69], and Patrimoine Syrien have stated that looting has been attempted there several times[70].

Most recently the regional museum of Raqqa, Qala'at Jabar Museum, was robbed on the 1st May, and 17 items were taken, including 7 figurines (three of the goddess Ishtar) and ceramics



Figure 3: Interpol's Most Wanted List (December 2011) (Centre bottom) [71]

dating back to the third millennium BC[72]. Some of the pieces were from rescue excavations conducted at sites which are now flooded under the waters of Lake Assad.

According to a report on Lootbusters[73], and picked up by Looted Heritage[74], the Damascus Museum has also been looted. However, the picture shown by Lootbusters[75] of a statue apparently taken from the Damascus Museum is identical to that reported stolen from the Hama museum, suggesting confusion in the accounts. As there is no other report released of looting at the Damascus Museum, this should be treated with caution.

According to Patrimoine Syrien[76], one of the biggest threats to museum collections is the lack of documentation, which would mean that in the event of theft, it would be impossible to trace the losses. This is globally recognised as a common problem in museums – UNESCO called it a "significant threat"[77], and the UK organisation FAME highlighted a "Storage Crisis"[78] as vast excavation archives are accumulated without the resources to adequately document and store them. Patrimoine Syrien fear that in Syria, only the museum links many of the objects to a site, and that without adequate documentation, movement in haste will sever any link to a site or source, leaving the artefacts unprovenanced. In order to protect the collections from looting and shelling, several museums have apparently been partially emptied and Patrimoine Syrien have expressed concern about the collections at Der'a, Homs, Hama, Idlib, Ma'aret el-Nu'man, Deir ez-Zor and Aleppo in particular.

As well as museums, several archaeological sites have been looted, in planned and opportunistic raids. The Syrian Arab News Agency published an article last year detailing looting at the site of Apamea: "Some saboteurs attacked the guards of those sites and threatened to kill them if they tried to stop them from committing their crimes"[79]. More details were released by the Charles Ayoub World Web Portal in January [80]: the robbers' drilling operations reached a depths of 2 metres, and mosaics were taken, as well as two capitals of the colonnade of decumanus[81]. Apparently the area damaged in the looting exceeds the total area excavated by the Belgium Archaeological team, who have been excavating since the 1930s. In the interview, Sakhel (Director of Museums) said the museum of Apamea, which is in the caravanserai in the town at the base of the site, had also been looted, and a Roman marble statue taken, and that looting of the site continues at night.

According to the interview, the World Heritage Sites of Crac des Chevaliers[82] and Palmyra, and the Tentative World Heritage Site of Ebla (Tell Mardikh)[83] are also subjected to looting. The looting at Ebla has also been mentioned by the Arabic site Shumaku[84] which claims an armed terrorist group was responsible. According to a statement on Patrimoine Syrien[85], the areas looted and damaged at Palmyra are:

- the Camp of Diocletian.
- The Valley of the tombs and the tombs of the Southwest and Southeast (Patrimoine Syriensage-graves or underground tombs).
- Triumphal arch and decumanus at colonnades
- The areas of the defensive walls South and North.
- The edge of the temple of Bel.

It has been suggested that at Palmyra government troops were involved, or at least complicit, as from their base in the ruins, any looting would theoretically have been visible to them[74], although this cannot be verified.

At Crac des Chevaliers[74] looting was anything but clandestine. Jammous, Director-General of the Antiquities and Museums Department said "gunmen broke into the castle, threw out the staff and began excavations to loot the site".

In their statement to SANA, the DGAM also said that the "Al-Lujat area between Sweida and Daraa provinces suffered secret excavation operations."[86]

According to Patrimoine Syrien, a number of other sites are known to have been looted, but no details of what or how are available. Including those sites already discussed, the list of sites for which there are reports of looting are:

- National Heritage Site – Fortress of Shaizar[87] (main door fractured, damage to interior, some objects reported stolen) (confirmed by the DGAM)
- Museum - Homs
- Museum - Hama
- Museum - Apamea
- Tentative World Heritage Site - Apamea
- Tentative World Heritage Site – Ebla (Tell Mardikh)
- World Heritage Site - Palmyra
- National Heritage Site - Tell Hamoukar[88]
- National Heritage Site - Tell Ashari[89]
- National Heritage Site - Tell Afis[90]
- National Heritage Site - Khan Shiekhoun[91]
- National Heritage Site - Tell Àcharneh[92]

It should be stressed that these are all substantial sites, and therefore looting is more likely to be recorded. Looting was already known to be increasing slightly in Syria in peacetime at small sites (*Figures 4 – 6*). At the British Association of Near Eastern Archaeology Conference in 2011, a paper was presented highlighting the increase in looting between 2003 and 2009 in the north of Aleppo province, monitored through satellite imagery[93] as part of Durham University Land of Carchemish Project. (Approximately 6 holes are visible in 2003 in *Figure 5*, and 16 in 2009 on *Figure 6*).



Figure 4: Looters' hole in Tell Sha'ir, Aleppo Province[94]



Figure 5: Looters' holes at Khirbet Seraiset (LCP1), Digital Globe Imagery 2003

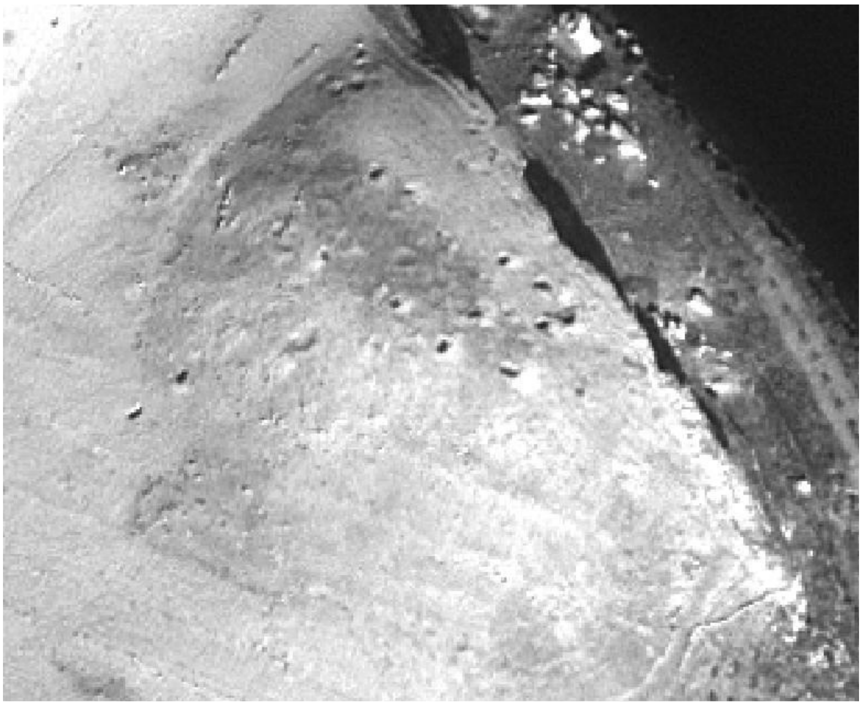


Figure 6: Looters' holes at Khirbet Seraiset (LCP1), Geoeye Panchromatic imagery 2009

Sakhel commented (paraphrased by Zablit[95]) that "although the practice has been ongoing for years, the pace has increased as a result of the unrest, which has left many sites unprotected and inaccessible [to security guards]".

In any conflict situation where there is civil unrest, looting, archaeological or otherwise, is unfortunately a likely outcome. Given looting is increasing, even in peacetime, is highly probable that looting has occurred elsewhere, at both major and minor sites, but the extent of the damage done must be assessed, and the true magnitude of what has been lost may never be known.

The thefts from Hama, and later from Apamea, created some controversy. One Arabic paper went so far as to suggest that the Syrian government were complicit in the looting[96].

> "Forget the Prime Minister of the system … another fact clearly indicates bands of another kind, practiced sabotage of Antiquities in Syria, nor operating under the cover of darkness this time, but in broad daylight, with the blessing of the system."

The writer goes on to list a series of damages allegedly perpetuated to sites by Regime forces.

> "Travel in tanks, Maher Assad, which penetrated the rotor Sbahi in the city of Hama, where the obsolete columns … and points pinned down there the bombing of the city, Volhakt damaged many of the features of the ancient city, including the Aramaic Castle? And what says he in the bombing of the mosque (which is built by the second Caliph Umar ibn al-Khattab, when it Patrimoine Syriensed in the Hauran), time after time, over the heads of the refugees? What about looting the daily suffering of the Tel al-Ash'ari, a roof and Yarmouk valley Hourani, which is oldest to the Stone Age? What about the archaeological Alchbih being in Idleb and Ma'arat Numan and other mountain corner, where the Kingdom of Ebla and Tel Mardikh (fourth millennium before Christ), and the Byzantine monastery Simbel, and Roman Deir Sita? What about the random digging, under the nose of the security services, in the hill site, known in the area of the island, where the city dating back to 3500 years BC, and archaeologists agree as one of the oldest centers of urbanization?
> I am not surprised that the big artifact stolen a few days after the issuance of circulating Presidency of the Council of Ministers of the system, in the city of … Hama! The item stolen is a rare golden statue to the Aramaic gods, stolen from inside the City Museum, where it became clear to investigators that there were no operations take off the doors of the museum or the breaking of glass, and that the robber walked into the place freely, and provide him all the time necessary to remove the statue from its base and move it outside the museum. Security authorities of criminal rushed to the arrest of the staff of the museum, without reaching a conclusion, of course, because the thief Cbih was and remains to protect the pillow Cbihh adults, where no law deters no power to prevent.
>
> … How do you do this, or do you dare already, if the points of vandalism, looting and theft are the same gangs Alchbih working with the men of the system"

Patrimoine Syrien issued this statement[97] in agreement.

> "The government's letter [i.e. the memo] can be viewed as a rather odd document, since it was released at a time when protest movements were limited. Ahead of many of the events, she [the minister] anticipates a situation of chaos, a priori unpredictable at the time. This letter may be interpreted as official carte blanche in anticipation of future looting, intended in advance to exonerate those who are found guilty at the highest level.
>
> It is known that the regime itself has organized a market for stolen antiquities, especially under the leadership of Rifa'at al-Assad. All Syrians know that the port from which this was operated was Rifa'at Latakia (archaeological looting and other traffic)."

Given the similar events which had previously occurred in Iraq and then in Libya, the Minister's prediction of "a situation of chaos" seems reasonable, and the warning and suggested precautions are sensible. The last decade has also seen a number of improvements in Syrian heritage management, such as the new museum in Deir Ez-Zor, the redevelopment of the Damascus museum, and a number of reconstructions designed to protect sites and aid in their interpretation, for example at Tell Beydar[98] and Khirbet al-Batrawy[99]. The First Lady herself was responsible for several projects designed to protect and enhance the rich heritage of the country[100], and in 2004 was granted an honorary doctorate from Rome University La Sapienza in recognition of her role "in preserving Syrian heritage"[101]. The laws are strongly in favour of heritage preservation and carry harsh penalties, and authorities are doing their best to enforce them. The DGAM employs guards at many sites, and has been active throughout Syria in their protection and promotion, and recently seized 1300 smuggled artefacts at Tartous[102]. Against this background, although the actions of an individual can never be ruled out, government complicity appears unlikely.

Uncontrolled / Illegal Construction and Demolition

The lack of security and change in law enforcement priorities may also have allowed illegal demolition and construction works to be undertaken. Uncontrolled development was a risk noted in several UNESCO documents relating to World Heritage Sites, such as Palmyra and the Ancient Villages, although the authorities are keen to try and stop it. In the documentation for the Evaluation of the Ancient Villages World Heritage Site Nomination in 2011, for example:

> "ICOMOS notes that disorganised growth of small settlements could rapidly have a negative impact on the property's landscape and conservation. It has been announced that a housing development project by a large property company within the boundary of Park No 3, not far from the major archaeological site of Sinkhar, was stopped at the last moment."[103]

A report published by the Global Heritage Fund last year on damage to Syrian sites in peace time agreed that it was a major threat[104]. According to a recent statement by the DGAM issued during the conflict, Bosra in particular has "suffered many illegal constructions"[105]. Patrimoine Syrien have listed areas where they believe illegal construction has commenced[106]:

- "In Province Der'a: Tell Ash'ari, in Nawa Hauran; Tell Umm; Tafas, Da'al, ancient city of Sahm al-Golan, ancient city of Matta'iya, where entire blocks were taken for new buildings
- Many sites in Quneitra province, where local management of DGAMS took advantage of the situation, in collaboration with the city of Quneitra, to get construction projects in protected heritage wilderness areas

- In the Limestone Massif, especially in the province of Idlib and that of Aleppo
- In the eastern provinces in the area of Jezireh, to Hassakeh, particularly at
    - Tell Hamoukar
    - Several sites near the Iraqi /Turkish border
- Sites in the Deir ez-Zor province, including
    - Tell 'Ashara (ancient Terqa) ,
    - Tell Sheikh Hamad (ancient Dur Katlimmu)
- Some sites of the classical period of the middle valley of the Euphrates, for example
    - Raqqa,
    - the sites of Sura (el-Hammam),
    - Sheikh Hassan
- and others for whom we do not yet have direct evidence"

Other Damage

In a statement given to the Syrian Arab News Network, The Directorate-General for Antiquities and Museums said that "the world heritage sites in Damascus, Aleppo, Old Bosra, Palmyra, Citadel of Saladin and Krak des Chevaliers were targeted by the terrorist groups"[107]. Unfortunately the extent and type of damage is unknown.

A release from Patrimoine Syrien[108] stated Ebla (Tell Mardikh) "has suffered major damage when it was turned into a battlefield for the loyalist army against the deserters". This was picked up by other news networks[109], but no further information is available. A similar fate was suffered by the Middle Acheulean site of Latamné[110]: the conflict has apparently damaged and degraded the site, but again no further information is available. (The site is thought to be more than a million years old, and contains some of the earliest evidence of early human development and tool use).

Within Hama province, a historic bridge on the Assi River, which connects the towns of Khattab and Balhasin, has been destroyed[111].

Section 2:

Damaged Sites

For most sites, all that is known of the damage to them is a few lines, often unverified. However, in some cases, more information is available, and is given (or collated) here.

World Heritage Site - Ancient Villages of Northern Syria

http://ghn.globalheritagefund.org/?id=682

In July 2011 the Ancient Villages of Northern Syria were declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The site consists of 8 archaeological parks (*Figure 7*) in the Limestone Massif area of Syria, containing the extremely well preserved remains of a number of Christian Byzantine villages. These villages, also known as the Dead Cities or Forgotten Cities, were abandoned between the second and tenth centuries.

According to Michel al-Maqdissi, head of archaeological excavations in Syria,[112] of all the archaeological riches, most at risk is the northern so-called Limestone Massif region that is home to hundreds of convents, monasteries and ancient churches:

> "In my opinion this is the most vulnerable and exposed region right now because it is outside the direct control of the antiquities department".

The monastery at Deir Sunbel is now also being used to display the Syrian flag, which has been painted onto it[113] (*Figure 13*), in the same manner of at Bosra[114]. Tanks have been sighted in the area[115], but the parts known to have been damaged are:

- A Roman "palace" in Aïn Larose was damaged by shelling [116].
- Rock shelters at Kafr Nubbel (alt. Kafr Nabo), located in Archaeological Park 2, were apparently damaged by the Syrian army in their search for deserters [117] (*Figure 1*).
- Deir Sunbel was reportedly damaged by shells according to videos uploaded onto You-Tube and shared by Patrimoine Syrien [118] (*Figures 8 and 9*).
- Al-Bara, previously a popular tourist destination in the Forgotten Cities, has also been damaged [119] (*Figures 10-12)*.

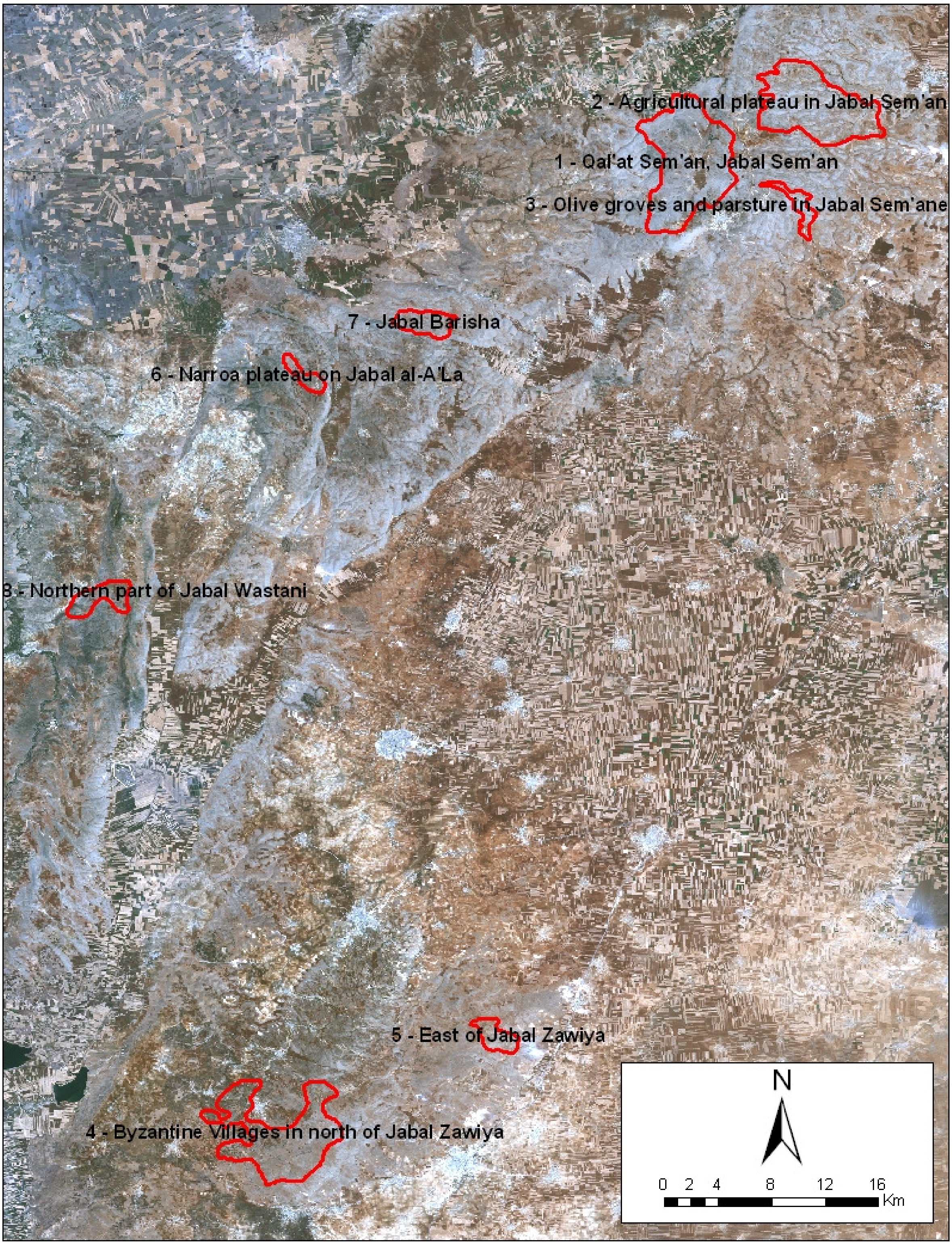


Figure 7: Ancient Villages of Northern Syria - Location of Archaeological Parks (2000 Landsat Imagery)



Figure 8: Shelling damage at Deir Sunbel [120]



Figure 9: Shelling damage at Deir Sunbel[121]

Another video shows damage to a historic building, from shelling or gunfire.



Figure 10 Shelling / gunfire damage to tomb at al-Bara [122]

The video never zooms out enough to identify the building for certain, but based on the architectural similarities visible here, it is most likely to be one of the famous beehive tombs, perhaps even this one (Latitude 35°41'22.13"N, Longitude 36°31'39.34"E).



Figure 11: Beehive tomb, al-Bara[123]

In this video frame, a man stands in the rubble of a destroyed building, probably at al-Bara, holding up the remains of a shell which he has just pulled from the rubble.



Figure 12 You-Tube video by local showing shell damage at Al-Bara.[124]



Figure 13: Syrian flag painted on Deir Sunbal[125]

Another video[126] at an unknown location in the limestone massif shows what appear to be ancient ruins pulled down and destroyed or used as road blocks.



Figure 14: Ruins destroyed in Ancient Villages



Figure 15: Ruins perhaps used a road block

Tentative World Heritage Site: Apamea and the citadel of Qal’at al-Mudiq

http://ghn.globalheritagefund.org/?id=690

Apamea was added to the Tentative World Heritage List in 1999. Previously known as Pharmake, it was renamed, then fortified and enlarged by Seleucus Nicator in 300BC. Large parts of the site are unexcavated despite almost 70 years of excavation (*Figure 16*).



Figure 16: Unexcavated mosaic revealed by visitor erosion[127]

During the current conflict Apamea has apparently been heavily damaged (see Section 1: p10) by looters using drills: several mosaics were removed, as well as two column heads and other, unknown, unexcavated artefacts. The museum based in the caravanserai in the town at the base of the site has also been looted, and a Roman statue stolen [128].

However, whilst more attention has been paid to the citadel, which has been subjected to prolonged shelling, a video was released showing shelling of the colonnade for which Apamea is famous - the main street of the city is 1.85km long, and was originally lined with 1, 200 columns, of which 400 have been restored and re-erected (*Figure 17*).



Figure 17: The colonnade at Apamea[129]

A video uploaded to You-Tube shows a tank shelling the colonnade[130]. All the following video stills are from videos which have been collated and shared by Le Patrimoine Syrien.



Figure 18: Tanks shelling the colonnade at Apamea (15 March 2012)

Another video shows at least two tanks sat in the ruins amid churned earth and rubble. Although most of it is out of focus, there is damage which may have been caused by the tanks. It is hard to definitely locate within the site: at one point a building is visible which may be the café, locating it at approximately (Latitude 35°25'2.74"N Longitude 36°24'7.86"E), at the intersection of the cardo and southern decumanus.



Figure 19: Tank sat in ruins at Apamea[131]

The citadel of Qal'at al-Mudiq was originally the acropolis of the ancient city, but was destroyed by the Romans in 64BC. Most of what remains is a 12th century Arab fort built by Nur Ad-Din: Hellenistic masonry is only visible on some of the lower levels. A village has been built on top of the ruins. Parts of the town around the base of the site date back to the 16th century. A video[132] shows the shelling of the 16th century mosque al-Tawhid in the town, again taken from the Ottoman caravanserai, described in detail in a later video[133], and another video[134] describes the damage in English. According to the DGAM, Masyaf Architectural Department was also attacked[135].

The citadel itself appears to have been shelled since at least 29 January 2012, when the first video was uploaded[136]. A video released the following day showed further shelling, and smoke and fire coming from the citadel. Numerous other videos have followed[137]. According to the Syrian Expatriates Organisation, at the end of March[138], the Local Coordination Committee in Mudiq reported that the southern wall had sustained severe structural damage, which can be seen in the following pictures.



Figure 20: Shelling damage to citadel (15 March 2012)[139]

Videos uploaded at the start of April show tanks at the gates of citadel[140], and fire inside [141]. The bulldozers apparently knocked through part of the walls to create an entrance[142]. The most recent video shows bulldozers entrenching positions into the side of the mound[143]. A large circuit has been dug around the base and major earth moving is being carried out.



Figure 21: Fire inside the citadel (01 April 2012)

Although slightly out of focus, this video frame in *Figure 23* shows the damage experienced by the citadel, and is comparable to *Figure 22*, which shows the many layers of rebuilding. According to a local resident[144], the house which is just visible on the top is approximately 200 years old.



Figure 22: Front of Qal'at al-Mudiq[145]



Figure 23: Damage to Qal'at al-Mudiq after prolonged shellling (26 March 2012)[146]

As a result of the damage sustained during the conflict, Apamea and the citadel have been upgraded to "Rescue Needed" on the Global Heritage Network.

World Heritage Site:
Bosra

http://ghn.globalheritagefund.org/?id=821

Bosra was inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1980. It was the capital of the Roman Province of Arabia: the most famous feature is a 2nd century theatre inside the 13th century Ayyubid fortress, but large parts of the city are well preserved and represent a comingling of cultures and faiths over a vast time span, which found a unique expression seen rarely, if at all, elsewhere.

Three videos have been uploaded and shared by Patrimoine Syrien showing fire and bomb damage to houses[147] (*Figure 24)*. As many of the residents live in the ancient ruins, there is no line between 'site' and the residential area. Another video of demonstrations in Crac des Chevaliers contains a reference to tanks destroying Bosra[148]. In a recent call to protect the heritage of Syria[149], Patrimoine Syrien also listed the mosque in Bosra as damaged by shelling. The mosque was founded in the time of Caliphate of Omar bin Khattab in the seventh century. The DGAM said the city has also been subjected to "illegal constructions", and has been targeted in attacks[150]. A city wall has also been painted in national colours during the protests[151], similar to Deir Sunbal (*Figure 13*).



Figure 24: Photo of a heritage house in the North District, allegedly destroyed by the Syrian military[152]

World Heritage Site:
Crac des Chevaliers (alt. Qal al-Hosn)

http://ghn.globalheritagefund.org/?id=885

The two castles of Crac des Chevaliers and Qal'at Salah El-Din were jointly designated a World Heritage Site in 2006, as they are among the most important preserved military castles in the world. Crac des Chevaliers was originally an Arabic castle, but it is best known as the stronghold and headquarters of the Knights Hospitaller. Nothing is known about the current status of Qal'at Salah El-Din, but shelling has been recorded at Crac. According to the DGAM, both Crac des Chevaliers and Qal'at Salah El-Din were targeted in attacks[153], but nothing more is known about the extent and type of damage to Qal'at Salah El-Din.

A video was released of a peaceful protest at Crac [154], and according to Patrimoine Syrien [155], the Castle was shelled the next day as a result, followed by

> "heavy shelling in the whole of the nearby area. Shells and exchanges of fire in the castle itself than its surroundings as well". *[sic]*

Several videos of the shelling have been uploaded to You Tube[156], but none are close enough to make out the extent of any damage. Patrimoine Syrien reports[157] that in particular, the ancient mosque in the centre of the citadel, which still retained traces of original paintwork in July 2010, has been damaged.

The Directorate-General of Antiquities and Museum have confirmed that armed gunmen broke into the castle, evicted the staff and looted it[158]. As the site is primarily architectural and has no finds on display, it is unknown what damage has been caused.

The internal conflict in Syria, and resulting damage to this site, has taken on a new, even darker dimension, as at least one person has used the damage as an opportunity to express religious hatred. In an anti-Islamic blog *Islam versus Europe: Where Islam spreads, freedom dies*, the author suggests the shelling of the World Heritage Site of Crac des Chevaliers was done by "Syrian Savages" - Muslims who were apparently destroying the non-Islamic parts of their Patrimoine Syrient [159].

> "It would not surprise me if Muslims took advantage of the chaos of conflict to destroy some of the crusader legacy there. … I somehow don't get the feeling they're going to much put out by the loss of a crusader castle."

As a result of the damage sustained during the conflict, Crac Des Chevaliers has been upgraded to "Rescue Needed" on the Global Heritage Network.

World Heritage Sites: Damascus and Aleppo

Several reports have been released of explosions in Aleppo and Damascus (see references Section 1: p10). On 6 January 2012, a suicide bomber caused the death of 26 people in Damascus, and later twin suicide bomb attacks were targeted at military compounds in the capital. Three further suicide bombings were reported in Damascus on 17 March 2012, and others on the 2 April and 27 April. Most recently, car bomb attacks during the early morning rush hour on the 10 May 2012 killed at least 55 people, and wounded almost 400[160], targeting a military intelligence compound.

Aleppo has also experienced explosions. On 10 February 2012, two bombs, targeted at security compounds, exploded. Both civilians and military personnel died in the blast. Another explosion on the 18th March went off between two residential buildings, and hours after a car bomb was foiled, another explosion went off on the 11 May[161].

Damascus and Aleppo are two of the largest cities in the Near East, and both claim the title of the oldest continuously occupied city in the world, with quite literally thousands of years of occupational remains, some of go to a depth of 8 feet below the current ground level. The centres of both are World Heritage Sites, encomPatrimoine Syriensing Roman temples, fabulous mosques (ancient and modern), Christian shrines and churches, ancient walls, historic souks, the ancient citadels, many other significant structures, and many ancient historic houses. According to the DGAM, both World Heritage sites have been targeted in attacks, but no further information is available[162].

Reports of the unrest are largely focussed on the suburbs and strategic targets, such as military compounds. However, in at least one attack, a nearby park where children were playing became collateral damage. Although at present there are few reports of historic structures being affected, collateral damage to historic structures, which are numerous in both cities, cannot be ruled out. One news report suggests that entire historic neighbourhoods in Aleppo have been bulldozed, but this has not been verified[163].

Tentative World Heritage Site (and Rest of City): Hama

http://ghn.globalheritagefund.org/?id=684

The historic town of Hama is a centre for the protests, and as such has been heavily shelled. Reports from the city are few, and almost none have focussed on the historic sites. The city is renowned for its norias used for watering the gardens, which—it is claimed—date back to 1100 BC. Though historically used for purpose of irrigation, the 17 norias remaining exist today as an almost entirely aesthetic traditional show. They were called "the most splendid norias ever constructed"[164] and were submitted as a Tentative World Heritage Site by the Syrian Arab Republic in June 1999 (***Figure** 25*).

Tanks are known to have been present in Hama since at least August 2011 [165], and they are known to have been near the locations of some of the water wheels. A video released in April[166] shows damage from shelling to one of the historic houses in the al-Arba'en quarter, although it is likely many more are affected. One news report suggests entire historic neighbourhoods have been bulldozed[167], and Patrimoine Syrien reports that the ancient citadel is damaged[168]. A video collage shared by Patrimoine Syrien allegedly shows the army poised on the citadel[169].



Figure 25: Al-Sihyuniyya And Al-Ga-Bariyya Norias, Hama[170]

Homs

There are numerous reports of the shelling of Homs, ancient buildings, mosques, churches and the ancient souk[171] are all heavily damaged, as well as more recent cultural buildings, such as newer mosques. The residents of Homs want to share the destruction of their town. In one video, for example, a young man records a long commentary on the damage, naming each damaged site, and describing what has happened to it[172].

The following presents a list of the cultural parts of Homs known to have been damaged.

- Mosque Saas Ben Abi Waqas[173]
- Mosquée à al-Naklhe[174]
- Mosque Qasem al-Atassi – minaret of modern shrine destroyed[175]
- Mosque Al-Qussayr – minaret destroyed[176]
- Mosque Khab al-Ahbar (alt. la mosquée Ka'b al-Ahbar) – minaret destroyed[177]
- Mosque al-Nekhla[178]
- Mosque Sheik Kamel Mouqrebi[179]
- Mosque al-Abrar[180]
- Mosque al-Zaferan[181]
- Mosque Khaled Ben al-Walid[182]
- Mosque Mustafa (alt. Moustefa Basha al-Housseyni), Bab al-Turkman[183]
- Mosque Kamel Bacha[184]
- Mosque Abou Der Al-gefary[185]
- Mosque Akhacha in Bab Tadmer, Homs[186]
- Mosque Oumer Al-Nebhani in Bab Tadmer, Homs [187]
- Church Dar al-selam[188]
- Church of St. Elian Homsi[189]
- Cathedral of Umm el-Zinnar – fire damage[190] - site may be almost 2000 years old
- Monastery of the Jesuit Fathers[191]
- Church El-arb'in[192]
- Hammam al-Basha – dome destroyed[193]
- The ancient citadel[194]
- Bombardment of the historic quarter of Bostan al-Diwan[195]
- Bombardment of the historic quarters of Bab Houd[196], Bab Dreb[197], and Bab Turkman[198]
- Historic houses[199] (*Figure 24*)
- The ancient souk[200] (*Figure 25*)
- Souk al-Hashish[201]



Figure 26: Damage to ancient houses in Homs[202]



Figure 27: Damage to the historic souk[203]

World Heritage Site:
Palmyra

http://ghn.globalheritagefund.org/?id=1100

In 1980, Palmyra was inscribed on the World Heritage List as one of the most important cities in ancient Syria. Its location by an oasis in the desert made it an important stop on trade routes as far back as the second millennium BC. It carried on to be an important Roman, Byzantine and Islamic town, and although the city fell into disuse in the 16th century, the ruins are still extremely well preserved, and display a blend of cultures. At the time of their discovery in the 17th and 18th century, they went on to influence the revival in classical architecture. They are said to have a haunting, magical property, which made them one of the most popular destinations for tourists in Syria.

Protests were organised in the ruins in December[204], and in February a story hit the news about the Syrian Army occupying the ruins[205]. According to refugees from the city, it was surrounded on all sides on February 4th. Security forces set up in the citadel overlooking the town and Roman ruins, shooting at anything that moved, looking for anti-regime rebels.

> "Tanks were also deployed near the Roman ruins at the entrance to Palmyra … Although communications with Palmyra were severed at the start of the campaign, those residents who have managed to get out spoke of daily machinegun and tank fire."[206]



Figure 28: View from the Citadel over the ruins[207]

A further report[208] suggested that in the ancient ruins, especially near the burial towers of the necropolis and near the Great Wall, tanks and heavy weapons have been positioned and barracks built.

A statement released by Patrimoine Syrien on 24 February 2012[209], and supported by an interview with the Syrian Director of Museums in April[210], suggested that Palmyra is also the victim of clandestine looting and damage. In particular, Patrimoine Syrien identified the Camp of Diocletian; the Valley of the tombs and the tombs of the Southwest and Southeast (Patrimoine Syriensage-graves or underground tombs); Triumphal arch and decumanus at colonnades; the areas of the defensive walls South and North; and the edge of the temple of Bel as damaged. According to the reports from the refugees, the army have destroyed and set ablaze several olive, palm and date groves using tank and machinegun fire. For many people, those gardens represented their livelihoods, and it may be desperation, rather than opportunism, which forces them to looting.

National Heritage Site: Qal'at al-Shmemis (alt. Selemiye, Salamyeh)

The exact status of Qal'at al-Shmemis (alt. Château de Chmémis) is unknown. An Ayyubid fort dating to 1231, it occupies a prominent position on a mound, and has an artificial ditch surrounding the walls.

According to reports, loyalist armed tanks were seen heading in the direction of the castle in February[211]. A call was issued to UNESCO, or anyone else who may be able to help, reporting damage to the castle and its environs in February[212]. Tanks were recorded in this video[213] nearby still in March, and local residents told Patrimoine Syrien in a statement that shelters for tanks were being dug around the base of the citadel[214]. A later video showed more pictures of tanks, a military flag flying from the castle, and embankments dug into the side of the hill[215] (*Figure 30*).



Figure 29: Shmemis Castle[216]



Figure 30: Embankments in the side of Shmemis Castle[209]

Conclusion

This report compiles all available information into one place that was available to me at the time of writing (16 May 2012). It will not contain all the damage, but nevertheless indicates the extent and serious nature of the on-going threats to the historic sites sustained during the conflict. Although Syria has been a State Party to the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and its First Protocol since 1958, and to the 1972 World Heritage Convention since 1975, all sides are using historic buildings in the conflict, drawing them into the struggle, while other historic buildings have suffered collateral damage. As highlighted by Sakhel, the escalation of the conflict over the Patrimoine Syrient year has made it increasingly difficult for the responsible authorities to protect Syria's archaeological and cultural heritage.

This report also highlights the concerns that heritage agencies and individuals have raised regarding the preservation of Syria's Patrimoine Syrient. As well as calling for an end to the conflict, numerous agencies have begun to call for enhanced protection for the sites, including the Committee of the Blue Shield, last year and again in April this year[217], Archaeological Institute of America Site Preservation Program[218], the Syrian Expatriates Organisation[219], Culture in Development[220], the Executive Director of UNESCO[221], and The French Institute of the Near East[222]. Most recently, on 14 April 2012, Patrimoine Syrien summarised the results of their information, and issued a further call for aid, citing those sites they felt most in need[223]:

1 - Cities of the Dead in the Limestone Massif (World Heritage Site)
2 - the citadel of El-Mudiq and surrounding areas and the site of Apamea (Tentative World Heritage Site)
3 - The city of Palmyra (World Heritage Site)
4 - Archaeological sites of Tell Sheikhoun Khan, Tell Qarqur, Tell Afis, Tell Sheikh Hamad, Tell Ash'ari and Hamukar in particular;
5 - Places of worship such as al-Omari mosque in the province of Der'a and historic mosques in the city of Homs.

This was followed by a further call specifically for the protection of museums on the 30th April[224] which was sent to international institutions and the international community more generally. This appeal highlighted the extent and richness of their collections, but also the lack of documentation, which would mean that in the event of theft, it would be impossible to trace the losses.

Despite the ongoing efforts of the DGAM, the damage to Syria's heritage is clearly extensive, and the full extent will not be understood for years, if ever. World Heritage Sites, national heritage sites, and small local heritage sites have all been damaged with equal irreverence. Some of the damage done will be irreparable, some of the items taken irreplaceable, and some history will be lost or destroyed without ever being known. The cost of repairs, restoration, reconstruction, and conservation will be high, and Syria will be forced to make tough choices about what to repair, and what cannot be saved.

The damage extends beyond the purely physical, and is drawn into the moral positions of those involved, used as tool to justify themselves, or denigrate the opposition. Some of those involved in the conflict use the damage as an ethical weapon, each side blaming the other, and claiming it is perpetrated in order to discredit them. Blame is traded, and the conflict becomes more bitter. This resonates across the wider global community affected by the conflict, inviting those who might otherwise remain detached to choose sides. It offers those who need little

invitation the opportunity to further inflame the situation, both within Syria and throughout the world.

The destruction of cultural heritage has been committed (intentionally or otherwise) by those on all sides of this conflict, whether out of a desire for the protection of strong citadel walls, or in the hunting of those in opposition to them. Others watch opportunistically from the outside, and have crept in to steal a heritage which does not belong to them, for a market which seeks only to profit from the others' loss.

In her opinion column in the New York Times, Irina Bokova, the Director-General of UNESCO wrote:

> "Protecting culture is a security issue. There can be no lasting peace without respect. Attacks against cultural heritage are attacks against the very identity of communities. They mark a symbolic and real step up in the escalation of a conflict, leading to devastation that can be irreparable and whose impact lasts long after the dust has settled.
>
> Attacks on the Patrimoine Syrient make reconciliation much harder in the future. They can hold societies back from turning the page toward peace.
>
> So protecting cultural heritage is not a luxury. We cannot leave this for better days, when tensions have cooled. To lay the ground for peace, we must act now to protect culture, while tensions are high."[225]

In the face of the blame, and the hatred, it becomes all the more important to remember those in Syria who have worked for years to preserve the treasures of the Patrimoine Syrient, and to pay tribute to those who struggle still to get their messages out, and to protect the heritage of Syria.

Appendix A – Leaked Memo regarding Looting



الجمهورية العربية السورية
رئاسة مجلس الوزراء
الرقم: ١/٩٥٧٥

فوري وسري

السيد وزير الاتصالات والتقانة
السيد وزير الثقافة
السيد وزير المالية
السيد حاكم مصرف سورية المركزي

وردتنا المعلومات التالية:

((ستقوم عصابات دولية محترفة بدخول القطر بعد أن قامت تلك العصابات بإدخال جزء من معداتها التكنولوجية وأجهزة اتصالات عبر الأقمار الصناعية إلى القواعد، وهذه العصابات متخصصة بسرقة المخطوطات والآثار والمتاحف والخزائن والبنوك، وسبق أن دخلت هذه الشبكة إلى العراق وليبيا لأن هناك إستراتيجية تهدف خلال الفترة القادمة إلى اقتحام البنوك والمراكز البريدية)).

يرجى الإطلاع وتشديد الإجراءات الأمنية من خلال تركيب بوابات أمنية وأجهزة إنذار وكاميرات مراقبة مخفية ، وتشديد الحراسة على المباني وإعادة النظر بعناصر الحراسة غير الكفوءة ونعلم بإجراءاتكم المتخذة.

دمشق في ٢٠١١/٧/٧م.

رئيس مجلس الوزراء
الدكتور عادل سفر

Figure 31: Leaked memo on Patrimoine Syrien [226]

Appendix B – Details of Stolen Statue

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Vol d'une statuette araméenne au musée de Hama سرقة تمثال ذهبي لآلهة آرامية في متحف حماه

by Le patrimoine archéologique syrien en danger الآثار السورية في خطر on Wednesday, 3 August 2011 at 13:48 ·

شذى المداد - خاص - داماس بوست) بدأت الحكاية عندما أرسل مدير آثار حماه كتاباً إلى الجهات المعنية يطلب فيه سيارة مصفحة لنقل كافة المقتنيات الثمينة في متحف حماه الوطني على وجه السرعة من أجل حمايتها من أي تعرض في ظل حالة الانفلات الأمني والعصيان المدني الذي تعيشه المدينة منذ اليوم الثالث من هذا الشهر.

عقب ذلك بيوم واحد فقط أي بتاريخ 14/7/2011أعلنت وزارة الثقافة أنّ سرقة ما وقعت في المتحف، الذي لم يشهد أي عملية اعتداء أو تخريب طيلة فترة الاضطرابات في حماة. في ذلك اليوم بينما كان أمين المتحف الوطني في بلده الأم في "مصياف" سرق تمثال ذهبي يمثل إله آرامي يعود للقرن الثامن للميلاد وأثبتت الدراسات قيمته العلمية العالية لنعلم بعدها أنّ متاحفنا جميعها تعرّض للانتهاك وأعمال التخريب، في سياق ما تعيشه البلاد من حركة اضطرابات واسعة. فمتحف بصرى الشام في محافظة درعا أغلق بعدما حاول البعض من المتظاهرين الاعتداء عليه ومتحف إدلب الوطني تعرّض لانتهاك منعه أهالي المجتمع المحلي في المدينة وإلا لحدث ما لا يحمد عقباه بحسب ما ذكرت مديرة

اشؤون المتاحف التي لم تعلم بالسرقة في متحف حماة بسبب تواجدها خارج القطر

واليوم نرى متحف حماة الوطني وقد أوقف كل من فيه بدءاً من: أمينة راكان سليمان مروراً بحارس القاعات فايز حماد وانتهاء بمراقب المتحف عبد الله الرحمون، أوقفوا على ذمة التحقيق الجاري على يد قالد شرطة حماة والأمن الجنائي، حيث الاتهامات تطال الجميع في المتحف، كما بيّن تقرير صادر عن الجهتين.

الاتهام والاتهام المضاد ما يرسم المشهد في المتحف، فتقارير الأمن الجنائي أثبتت، بحسب ما قاله مدير آثار حماه أنّ السرقة حدثت من داخل المتحف فليس هناك أي كسر أو خلع لأبواب المتحف وأنّ المسؤول عن فقدان التمثال بلا شك هم موظفي المتحف ممن يملكون المفاتيح الداخلية والخارجية في حين تشير المعلومات الأولية أنّ من كان هناك ساعة وقوع الحادثة مدير الآثار وموظف آخر في المتحف بينما كان الأمين كما أشرنا سابقاً في بلده ولم يتمكن يومها من التواجد في المتحف بسبب الحصار القائم في حماه على حدّ قوله.

لا تزال التحقيقات حتى اللحظة جارية دون معرفة الفاعل غير أننا نريد أن نسأل أين الحماية المفترض أن تكون موجودة في هذا الظرف لاسيما أنّ متاحف أخرى قبل متحف حماه كما في درعا تعرّضت للتهديد ساعة وللتخريب ساعة أخرى، فما الذي يتحمّل المسؤولية

مدير عام الآثار والمتاحف الدكتور بسام جاموس يجيب بالتالي:

الحماية توفرت من قبل قوات حفظ النظام واللجان الشعبية لكن أي حماية والسرقة من داخل المتحف، البعض استغل " الفوضى والفلتان الأمني وفعل ما فعل"، وأضاف جاموس أنّ لا الاتهام يطال الجميع بما فيهم مدير آثار حماه والمراسلات ستكشف ذلك، معتبراً أنّ عملهم يواجه اليوم معوقات شتى خاصة في مناطق التوتر.

في سياق متصل تحدّث المدير السابق لآثار حماه ـ رفض الكشف عن اسمه ـ أنّ السرقة حدثت بينما لم يكن أحد من الحراس متواجداً في المتحف بسبب الظرف الأمني في حماة يومها، ومع ذلك أوقف البعض منهم بينما يشير "جاموس" إلى ملفات الفساد التي أوقفت المدير السابق عن عمله وأحيل إلى المحاكمة فأي اتهام يحق له توجيهه وعلى حدّ قوله: " على الصحافة ألا تسمع لجهة واحدة أسالي وفاء شباط مدير الرقابة في المديرية عنه وكيف أقيل من منصبه بسبب ارتكابه مخالفات شنيعة". في حين يوضح مصدر آخر أنّ جاموس يقول كلامه هذا انطلاقاً من أحقاد شخصية.

لا يسعنا في هذه اللحظة سوى التأمل بتحقيقات نظيفة ونزيهة تستطيع أن تعرف من سرق تاريخ بلادنا وإرثه الحضاري، إنه تمثال آرامي مكسو بالذهب، لا يجب السكوت على الجريمة، نعم جريمة وفضيحة أن يقوم شخص ما بسرقة آثار البلاد وهي تمر بأصعب الظروف ثم يرمي الاتهامات جزافاً هنا وهناك فيضيع الصالح بالطالح، نحن نطالب بتحقيق نزيه كي لا تتكرر الحادثة في متاحف أخرى.

يذكر أنه قبل سنوات حدثت سرقة في مديرية آثار اللاذقية وشكلت يومها لجان تحقيق في الأمر لم تتوصل إلى الفاعل إلى يومنا هذا وأيضاً كانت سرقة تمثال!!!

المصدر: شذى المداد - خاص - داماس بوست

July 21st, 2011 - 08:26 PM

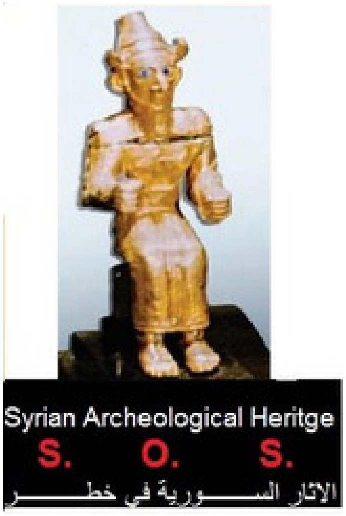


Figure 32: Details of stolen statue on Patrimoine Syrien [227]

Translation (Google Translate):

(Shada ink - special - Damas Post) all began when he sent director of antiquities in Hama, a letter to the concerned authorities requesting the armored car to move all valuables at the Museum of Hama National urgently in order to protect them from any exposure under a state of lawlessness and civil disobedience, which experienced the city since the third day of this month.

A day later and the only one which I learned on 07/14/2011 of the Ministry of Culture that the theft took place in the museum, which has not been attack or sabotage the process over a period of unrest in Hama, in that day while he was Secretary of the National Museum in his home country in the "Masyaf" stole a golden statue represents the god of Aramaic is up to the eighth century AD, and studies have shown scientific value of high, for we know then that our museums are all exposed to abuse and vandalism, in the context of experiencing the country from the movement disorders and a wide, Vtv Bosra Sham in the province of a shield closed after he tried some of the demonstrators assaulted , and the National Museum of Idleb exposure to prevent violation of the people of the community in the city, except for an event not bad consequences, according to what reported **by the Director of Public museums were not aware of theft at the Museum of Hama because of its presence outside the country!**

Today we see the Museum of Hama National has stopped all of it starting at: secretary Rakan Solomon through the guard halls Fayez Hammad and the end of an observer Museum Abdullah Rahmon, arrested in connection with the ongoing investigation by the police chief protectors and criminal security, where the charges affect everyone in the museum, as between A report issued by both sides.

The charge and the charge counter what paints the scene in the museum, Reports of criminal security proved, **according to what the director of antiquities in Hama** that the theft occurred from inside the museum there is no fracture or dislocation of the doors of the museum and is responsible for the loss of the statue without a doubt are the museum staff who have the key internal and external, While preliminary information indicates that there was an hour of the incident and the Director of Antiquities, another employee at the museum while he was Secretary As noted earlier in his day were unable to be present in the museum because of the blockade based in Hama, he said.

Investigations are still ongoing until the moment without knowing the actor is that we want to ask where the protection is supposed to be present in this circumstance, especially since the other museums by the Museum of Hama as a shield in the face the threat of sabotage hour and another hour, what is to blame

Director General of Antiquities and Museums, Dr. Bassam Jamous, answer the following:

"Protection available by the forces of order and people's committees, but no protection and theft from within the museum, some people took advantage of the chaos and lawlessness, and did what he did," he said buffalo that does not charge affects everyone, including the director of antiquities in Hama and correspondence reveal that, considering that their work is today facing difficulties especially in the various areas of tension.

In a related development, former director spoke to the effects of Hama on condition of anonymity that the theft occurred while not one of the guards present at the museum because of the security situation in the protectors of the day, however, stopped some of them, while indicating "**buffalo** "to corrupt files that stopped the Director previous

work and was referred to trial A charge has the right guidance and he said: "the press not to hear one side and the fulfillment of February ASK Control Manager in the Directorate with him and how he was dismissed from his post because he committed the heinous offense." While another source shows that Buffalo says his words out of personal grudges.
We cannot at this moment, only Meditation investigations of clean and fair You know who stole our country's history and cultural heritage, that statue Aramaic coated with gold, you should not ignore the crime, yes crime and menial that someone stole the effects of the country is going through the most difficult circumstances, and aims charges randomly here and there wastes a good Btalh, we demand an impartial investigation to the incident is not repeated in other museums.
Recalled that years ago was stolen in the Directorate of the effects of Latakia and formed the day of commissions of inquiry in the matter did not reach the active to the present day, and also the theft of a statue!!

Appendix C - Notes, Image Accreditations, and Copyright

Please bear in mind that unless otherwise stated, all YouTube videos were shared by Le Patrimoine Syrien[6].

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[16] 11 March 2012. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=juuFkGMuuL8&feature=youtu.be (Accessed 14 April 2012)
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[18] 01 April 2012. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZxD8CSAqp9w&feature=share (Accessed 14 April 2012)
[19] 07 March 2012. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kFlAS8GnStM&feature=youtu.be (Accessed 14 April 2012)
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[31] 05 April 2012. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U0mUcfgtslU&feature=share (Accessed 14 April 2012)
[32] 23 March 2012. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OvSiGUDKv6A&feature=youtu.be (Accessed 14 April 2012)
[33] http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1cISFzG0cAc&feature=youtu.be (Accessed 10 April 2012)
[34]26 Feb 2012. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dwv9XofxKu0&feature=youtu.be
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